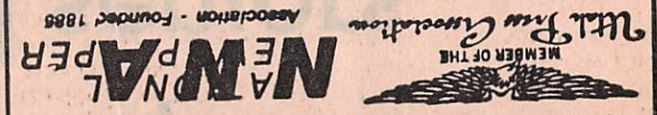


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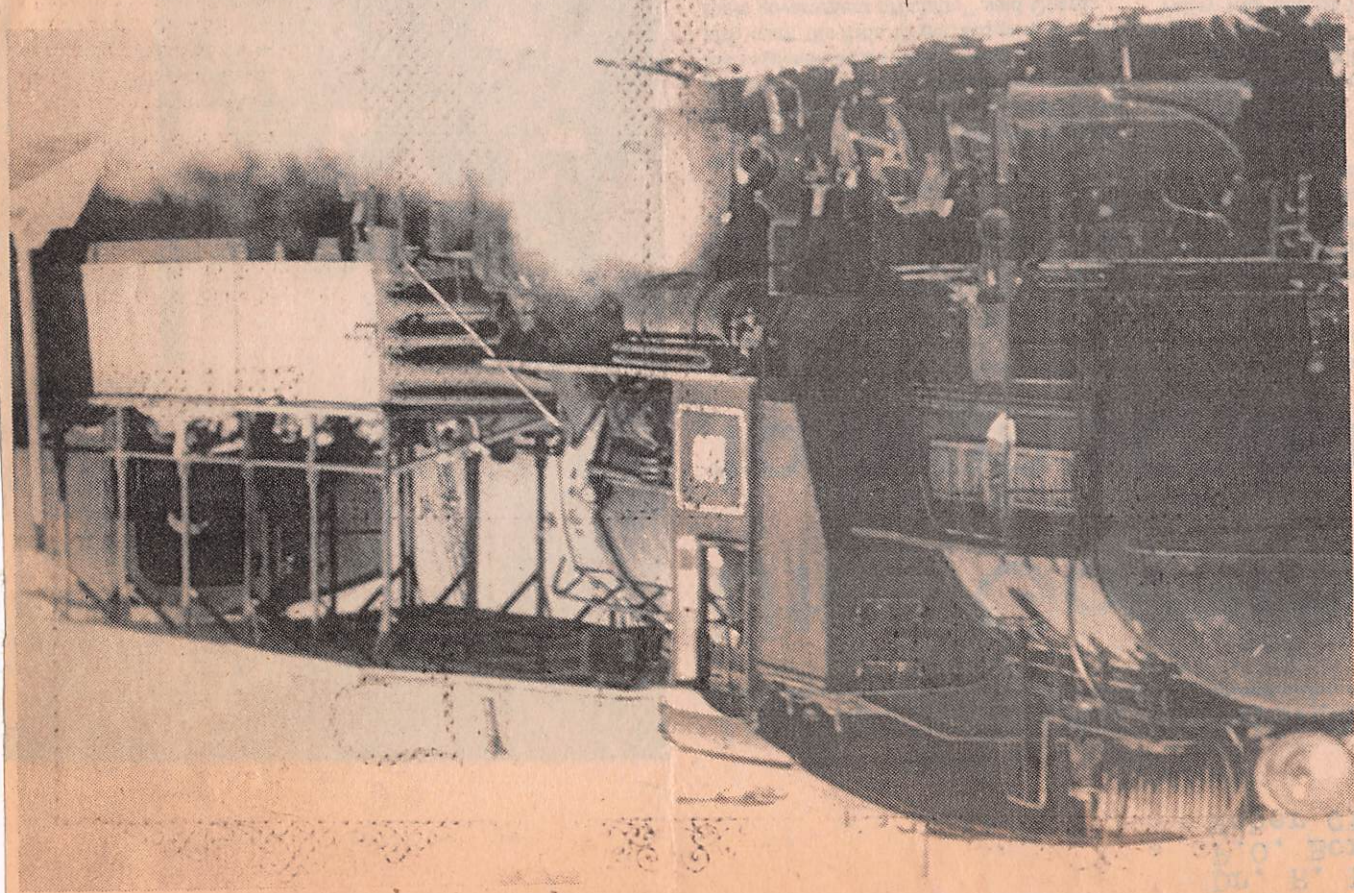
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The Heber Creeper rides again

It's that time of year again. The Heber Creeper has begun the pre-season ferrying of school children up and down the canyon to the dam. These charter trips will continue weekdays, until Mother's Day weekend, when the Creeper will commence weekend runs for the public. Beginning on Memorial Day, the trains will start regular weekday service for the public.



Lowe Ashton smiles down from newly-acquired engine No. 36, known as Runaway.

Old No. 36 to roll

Runaway will join Creeper

By Jan Padfield

Deseret News staff writer 29 Apr 1977

HEBER CITY — The famous runaway engine, old No. 36, will go into service next week on the Heber Creeper.

The 90-ton giant is being shipped by truck from its home with White Mountain Scenic Railroad at Fort Apache Indian Reservation in Arizona. Last fall it suddenly broke loose and "chased" the large truck (and its stunned driver) on which it had been mounted, down a highway.

Lowe Ashton, president of Wasatch Mountain Railroad, says the Creeper is scheduled to take about 6,000 school children on educational trips this spring.

He expects the Creeper to carry at least 50,000 tourists on the Heber to Bridal Veil Falls run this summer.

Another iron horse has been added to the stable. This one is a 70-ton beauty, called No. 100, which also came from White Mountain Railroad. This gives the steam engine buffs here seven steam locomotives, one of the biggest stables in the country.

"The thing I'm so pleased about is that the two

new engines are so much less expensive to operate. Last year with Old 618 . . . she's a great engine, but inefficient . . . we used 10 ton of coal a day, at \$40 a ton. That meant \$400 a day for coal," Ashton said. The runaway will burn waste oil, and her owner is predicting operating her will cost no more than \$80 a day.

Reed Hatch, former owner of Ashton's most recently acquired engines, is staying in Heber City temporarily while he gets the temperamental, pampered prima donnas of the railroad "gentled down" and ready to roll again.

By far the most popular runs on this railroad are the "family specials." So they'll be increased from just Monday evenings to four nights a week, Monday through Thursday.

Night club trips will be on Fridays and Saturdays. Running time has been cut 27 per cent since the engines no longer have to be switched at Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon.

A new personality has been added to the entertainment staff. He is "Engineer Ed", who tours schools and explains the operation of the steam engines and the railroad business to elementary students.

Sunday Morning, July 10, 1977

Lifestyle

Section W

The steam engineer who could

By Judy Magid
Lifestyle Writer

When the pressure really builds up and he has to let off steam, Reed Hatch is sure the guy to do it.

He's the owner and chief engineer of X-100, one of the last of the old-time steam engines. These days his run is from Heber City to Vivian Park and back on the Heber Creeper.

"It's the only machine ever made that's 'alive,'" Engineer Hatch says with a smile. "It runs on live steam. I really love these old steam engines. I think they ought to be preserved in working order."

"You know, at one time, the Union Pacific alone had about 1,800. Now there are maybe four or five left. It's a shame."

Touring the yard with Mr. Hatch is an education in railroading as he greets people and explains what they do in their jobs. He points to a sad-looking engine and shakes his head.

Engines Deserve Care

"Look at the waste. It's like anything else — they've got to have care. If you do take care of these engines, they'll keep on for years."

"Take X-100. She was born in 1926 and she makes this run easy as anything. Old number 36 there had an accident when we were bringing her up from Arizona; she fell off the truck. She was born in 1930. As soon as we get her repaired, she'll be ready to roll."

Mr. Hatch says he's done "just about everything" in his life from logging to being a cowboy. ("I'm still a cowboy in the winter down in Arizona — I run 250 head of cattle.")

"I started on trains when I was about 14 years old. I learned on a log train out in Arizona."

"Funny thing. A few years back, they were filming 'Bound for Glory' and using a scenic railway I owned. This guy comes up to me and says, 'Reed, you remember me?' And it was Beans Smith, the man who taught me on that old log train. That's 54 years since we saw each other."

A man who practices what he preaches, Engineer Hatch takes good care of his engine.

Lots of Pressure

It takes about two hours to build up enough pressure to roll. The steam comes out at about 900 degrees. There is a safety valve that lets the steam out when the pressure reaches a certain point.

"Few people ever survive being in the engine if she blows up," Mr. Hatch says. "But old 36 did blow out her front end once and we came through all right."

Everyone who works on the Heber Creeper seems to be a railroad fan. Cline Page, who is a conductor in the daytime, came up from Arizona with Mr. Hatch.

"I worked on that scenic railway. And then I travel a lot with my wife. I do all kinds of things around here — and I really enjoy talking with all the folks who come up to ride with us."

The passengers on the Heber Creeper are not limited to parents taking their children on a train ride for the first time, although that's a big part of it.

"Yesterday we had two retired conductors from the Union Pacific come up to ride with us," said Cindy Drury who runs the ticket booth ("I used to be a stewardess on the train but they didn't have maternity uniforms").

"These guys stood around with their big U.P. buckles and talked about the old days when I used to run old 618 for 45 years."

"We have lots of railroad buffs who come up here."

Diane Hyde, who also works in the depot, adds that one retired railroad man from Evanston, Wyo., comes up every year with his whole family.

"They make every run — the 11 a.m., the 3 p.m. and the night run. They just love it."

Though there is always a festive atmosphere around the Heber station, a lot of hard work is done to maintain the safety of the passengers and the trains. Kim Bezzart, for instance, is a new rail (beginner on the train) and working as a fireman.

"I asked especially for this job. I really like it. The special soft spot for the old steam engines."

"But I think that all of us young-old kids have a special soft spot for the old steam engines."

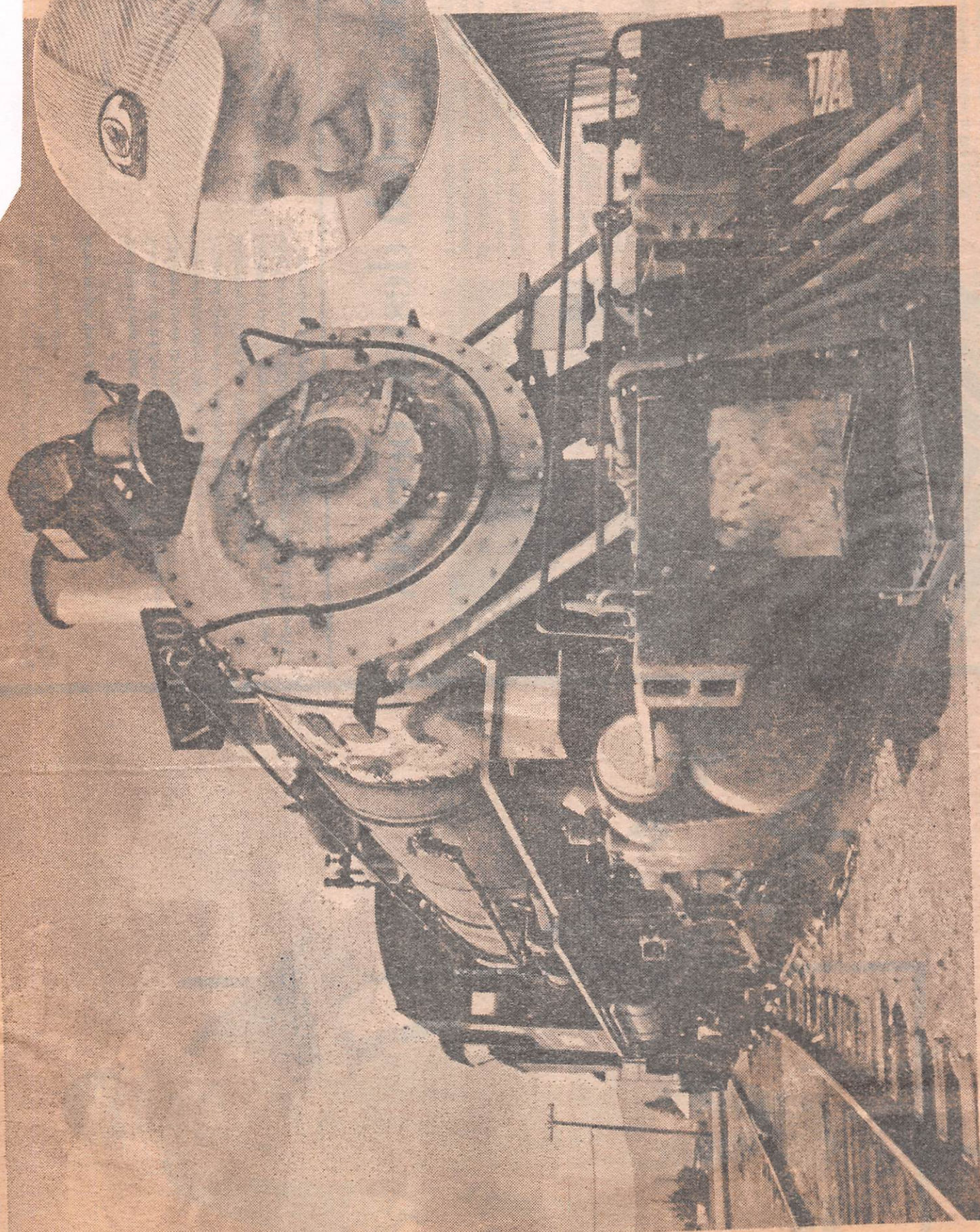
Although Mr. Hatch loves the steam engines, he's a firm believer in looking forward, not back.

"I love Amtrak," he says. "I use it when I go on up to California to see my other engine. And if I really have time, my favorite way to travel is by luxury liner. Oh, and I like to fly, too."

train engine holds about 5,000 gallons of water. It takes 2,500 to 3,000 gallons to go one way. I watch to maintain the pressure and I get to ring the bell," he



Cline Page



Reed Hatch

Old number X-100 (otherwise known as the Heber Creeper) is one of four or five steam engines left.

Terms for railroad buffs

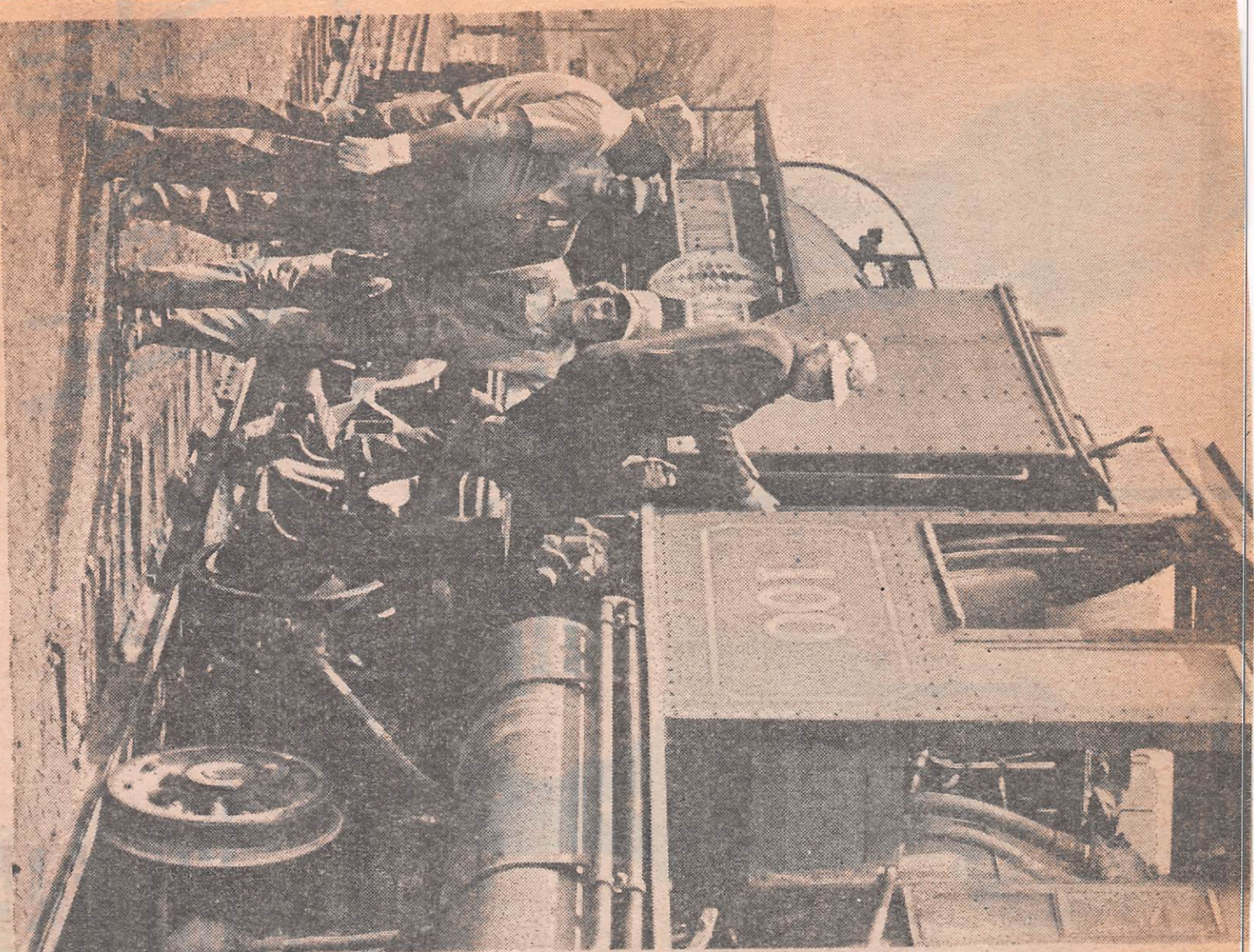
For railroad buffs, here are a few old railroader terms that are still used around the yard.

- Filling station: water tank.
- Boxcar artist: tramp or hobo.
- Juice, soup: water.
- Master mechanic's blood: valve oil.
- Spar: a pole used to shove car when switching.
- Toothpick: railroad tie.
- Whangdoodle: an outlying telephone.
- Live lumber: any living freight, man or beast.
- Give the high sign: whistle off to sound departure.
- Jingle the brass: ring the locomotive bell.
- Blow smoke: boast.
- Pension run: easy run.
- Whiskers: seniority (long whiskers, long seniority).
- Wrench artist: mechanic.
- New rail: novice at railroading.
- Johnny-on-the-spot: fireman who keeps the steam pressure up.
- Down the cinders: along the track.
- Off the steel: away from the railroad.



Owner and engineer of the X-100 is Reed Hatch. He learned on a logging train in Arizona.

Tribune Staff Photos
By Frank Porschalis



Heber Creeper crew members are Cline Page, left, Hal Jausi, Kim Bezzant, Reed Hatch.

Heber Creeper ride is a journey into the past

By Irene Bardole

Deseret News correspondent

HEBER CREEPER — Like a gigantic caterpillar, the Heber Creeper train inches its way around the shores of Deer Creek reservoir, over a mountain pass, and down the tortuous, winding heart of Provo Canyon.

The journey into the past begins with the wail of the boarding whistle at the old train depot at Heber City, with its longest run ending at Bridal Vail Falls in Provo Canyon, some 50 miles and 3½ hours later.

Lowe Ashton of Heber City is the man with a dream who put it all together. "The steam engine has a soul of its own," says Ashton. And his enthusiasm for the steam railroad is shared by train engineers, stewardesses and railroad helpers. In peak season, up to 70 local workers keep the train rolling.

Stan Jennings and Dennis Spendlove, working as part-time engineers for their third summer, put in a "long, hot nine-hour day, coping with occasional engine problems. 'Sometimes the bearings get pretty hot, but we stop and re-oil them,'" said Jennings, formerly a railroad engineer in Texas. There are two engineers in the cab at all times, and three on duty during the working day. The training to become engineer proceeds from apprentice freeman to fireman

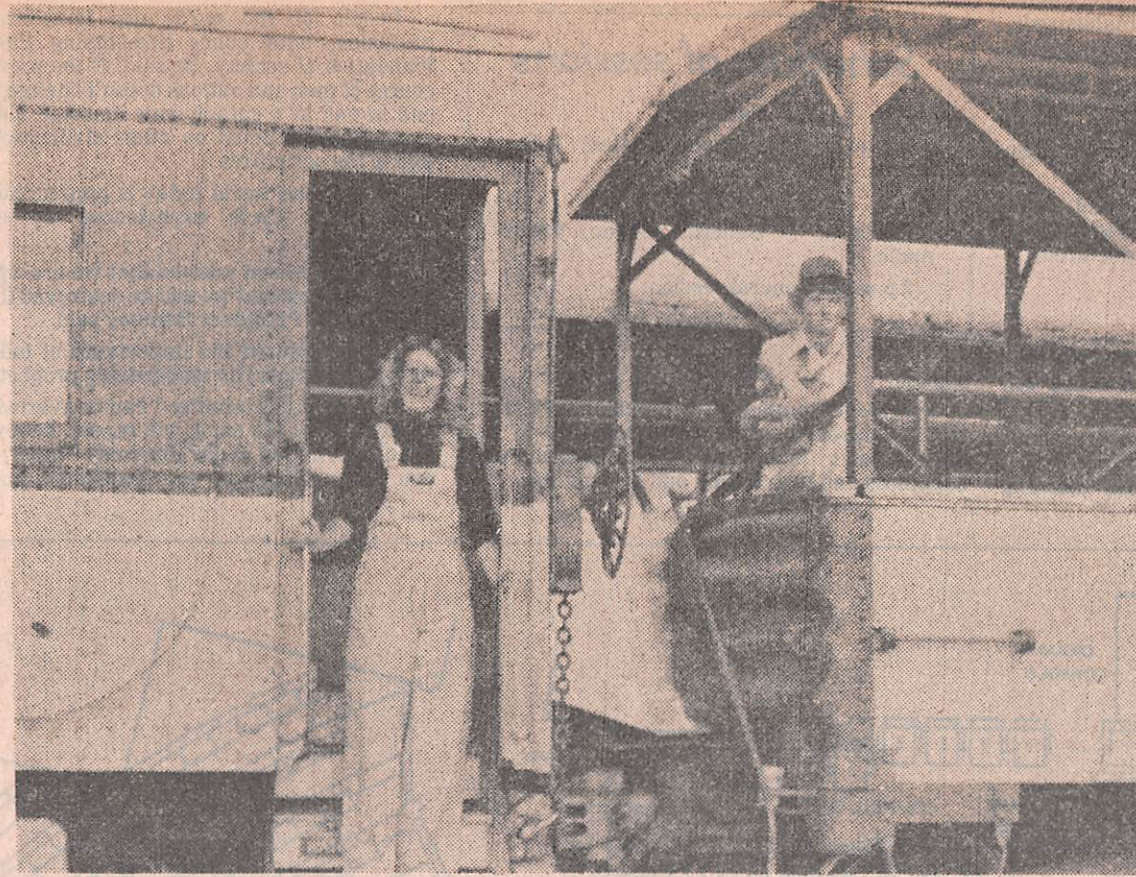
and finally to engineer.

Despite the problems created this season by rain on almost every holiday weekend, fire hazards from the drought, track breakdowns, and some locomotive failures, business has managed to jump 20% over last year. Ashton credits the increase to travel tours and foreign visitors.

Almost every train run has riders from four or five foreign countries, as shown by a survey of passengers taken this year. During one run this summer, there were more people from outside the United States than inside riding the train.

The original Heber Creeper claims a rich heritage, tracing roots back to 1899 when the line, owned by Utah Eastern Railroad Company, ran from Heber City to Provo. Although the early dream of the Creeper going over Wolf Creek Pass into the Uintah Basin and on to Colorado was never realized, it has managed to keep from extinction. Five companies ran trains on the same run and they merged to keep in business. They laid railway bed which can still be seen in some areas by the Provo River and near Wolf Creek Pass.

"It was the end of the era of the railroads, and the companies just went broke," said Ashton. Even today, he said, the Uintah Basin economy would benefit by a railroad transportation



Heber Creeper employes Melodee Clarke and Roger Mahoney, welcome passengers.

system.

An unusual set of circumstances allowed Ashton to lease an abandoned right-of-way in this popular scenic area. His railroad leases and maintains the track from the state but not the ground it goes over.

"Because of its unique quality," he said, "it will probably always be Utah's only scenic steam railroad. He estimates that to duplicate it, more

than \$10 million would be needed. Even so, Ashton said, there is no comparable location to the Wasatch Mountain Park route.

The Heber Creeper presently boasts five steam locomotives in its stable, all of which run regularly. They range from a 1920 gear-driven engine to a 1930 oil burner. Ashton also hopes to acquire an electric diesel locomotive

and a rescue engine for emergencies.

Although the train certainly isn't the Orient Express, and all past glory is left strictly to the imagination, nobody seems to mind much. However, innovations are being planned. "We plan to restore the cars to fit the image of the heyday of the railroads, with red velvet draperies and glass chandeliers," said Ashton.

Perhaps the most exciting seats on the train are in the open air cars at the back which bump along behind the snack car. These cars are a favorite spot for families who provide their own hampers of food. Family Night each Monday during the season fills these cars to capacity.

The train depot is glamorized with pretty girls like Diane Hyde and Kathy Kohler at the tick-

et window, wearing striped bib overalls. Younger high school students, Kelly Christensen and Roger Mahoney, help to keep things running smoothly at the station.

Once the train is rolling, a traditional old-fashioned songfest features the combined talents of local high school and college students, they go from car to car providing musical harmony.

While Scott McEwen strums the guitar and Linda Nichol picks the banjo, these homegrown entertainers give out with such renditions as "I've Been Working on the Railroad" and the "Wasatch (Wabash) Cannonball."

Ray Carool, a man of many parts, not only helps service the trains but plays the guitar. Melodee Ckarl, Cathie Williams, Diana Nichols visibly enjoy their jobs as stewardesses. "We enjoy meeting people from all over the world. Many come from great distances," Melodee said, "and it's fun just being part of the train crew." Providing information to passengers is also an important part of their duties. "We have to be able to answer all kinds of questions about steam engines," said Cathie Williams, "and we have learned a lot about our own valley." They all admit to being "hooked on trains."

Some who ride the Creeper send enthusias-

tic letters. One family last year sent Ashton a Christmas card showing their children waving happily out the window of the train. Ashton, who always enjoys hearing from passengers, keeps a file of letters and cards sent to him.

What are future plans for the Heber Creeper? Besides the renovation of the coach and dining cars, Ashton plans to winterize the train, thereby tapping the winter recreation market. "We have proven it is marketable, and winter is even more beautiful than summer, seen from the train." Ashton would count on the Park City and Sundance skiers to provide patronage. The winter train concept is centered around a tram system connecting surrounding ski areas. This would be good news to the 24 stockholders of the Creeper, who have not received a return on their investment, since it is not yet a money-making venture for them.

The Creeper still rides the rails during the autumn week. The last lap seems to go more slowly as it chugs past the portals of Wasatch State Park winding its way back to the barn, but one realizes that the frantic world has been bypassed somewhere along the way. Indeed, it seems as if the legendary short-run railroad from another century will still be alive and rolling into a new era.